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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the function of deixis in the poetry of the 20th century Italian, Eugenio Montale, in particular, his "In limine." The main objective is to show how deixis is involved in the dynamic relationship between text and reader. A constant problem in Montale's texts is that of a disharmony felt by the poetic voice with the spatio-temporal dimensions in which the reader is placed, both existentially and historically, and that are felt as obstacles preventing the passage into new dimensions. The traditional concepts of space and time lose their claustrophobic significance. A cline of contexts of situation is created by poetic discourse, from that where the readers are invisible eavesdroppers, overhearing a conversation between others to that in which "the reader[s] can [...] place themselves within the deictic centre" (Semino 1992; 137ff) by adopting an appropriated distance toward the events that are being recounted. In Montale's "In limine," the readers are not only eavesdroppers or able to place themselves in the deictic center, but symbolically take an active part in the context of communication and become a necessary element for the functioning of the text. In this particular poem, the use of deixis is fundamental to aid in the understanding of what kind of relationship the speaking voice wants to establish with the reader-addressee. (Contains 26 references.) (Author/NAV)

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Deixis and the Dynamics of the Relationship Between Text and Reader in the Poetry of Eugenio Montale

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DEIXIS AND THE DYNAMICS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEXT AND READER IN THE POETRY OF EUGENIO MONTALE.

Rossella Riccobono (DAL)

Abstract

This article analyses the function of deixis in the poetry of Eugenio Montale, in particular 'In limine'. The main objective is to show how deixis is involved in the dynamic relationship between text and reader. A cline of contexts of situation is created by poetic discourse, from that where the reader is 'invisible eavesdropper, overhearing a conversation between others' to that in which 'the reader can [...] place himself or herself within the deictic centre' (Semino 1992:137ff) by adopting an appropriate distance towards the events that are being recounted. In Montale's 'In limine' the reader is not only an 'eavesdropper' or able to place him/herself in the deictic centre, but symbolically takes an active part in the context of communication, and becomes a necessary element for the functioning of the text.

1. Introduction

Eugenio Montale (1896-1981) is one of the major Italian poets of the 20th century. During his lifetime he worked as translator, journalist, opera and literary critic. His poetic work was written over sixty-five years and includes: *Ossi di seppia* (1925; 1928), *Occasioni* (1939), *La Bufera e altro* (1956), *Satura* (1971), *Diario del '71 e del '72* (1973), *Quaderno di quattro anni* (1977).

The constant problem presented by the Montalian texts is that of a disharmony felt by the poetic voice with the spatio-temporal dimensions in which he/she is placed (both existentially and historically) and which are felt as obstacles preventing the passage into new dimensions where the traditional concepts of space and time lose their claustrophobic significance. The Montalian voices are described by various metaphors as prisoners of spatio-temporal dimensions. In 'In limine', the poetic voice is described as like a fish in a net:[1]

Cerca una maglia rotta nella rete	(Look for a broken mesh in the net
che ci stringe, tu balza fuori, fuggi!	that grips us, leap out, and escape!)

('In limine', *Ossi di seppia*, ll. 15-16)

In 'Meriggiare pallido e assorto' the poetic voice is imprisoned by a high wall in an uncomfortably hot and hostile garden:

Meriggiare pallido e assorto	(To laze the noon pale and thoughtful
presso un rovente muro d'orto,	near to some blazing garden-wall,
ascoltare tra i pruni e gli sterpi	to listen in the thorn-hedge and the brake
schiocchi di merli, frusci di serpi.	to clattering of blackbird, rustle of snake.
[...]	[...]
E andando nel sole che abbaglia	And as you go in the dazzling sun
sentire con triste meraviglia	to feel with sad bewilderment
com'è tutta la vita e il suo travaglio	how all of life and its suffering
in questo seguitare una muraglia	is in this steady following
che ha in cima cocci aguzzi di bottiglia.	a wall with jagged bottle for its rim.)

('Meriggiare pallido e assorto', *Ossi di seppia*)

The pivot of Montale's poems becomes the search for salvation which is, in most of his lyrics, associated with the successful relationship between the speaking voice and the hearer-addressee who can, to a certain extent, be recognisable in a feminine figure, in a past or possible lover with whom the speaking voice can complete the philosophical journey which will free both of them. In 'Dora Markus' the hearer-addressee indicates that the land to which she belongs is beyond the sea. Just as in 'In limine' a wall encloses the

speaking voice within a claustrophobic garden, the sea in 'Dora Markus' can be seen as another metaphor for the insurmountable obstacle which divides Dora from her own country, a land which is placed beyond the spatial co-ordinates where the speaking voice and the hearer-addressee are placed. This can be recognised as a feeling of disharmony with the surrounding spatio-temporal environment which unites the hearer-addressee and the Montalian poetic voice as twin-souls:

Fu dove il ponte di legno	(It was where the wooden pier juts out
mette a Porto Corsini sul mare alto	above the sea at Porto Corsini
e rari uomini, quasi immoti, affondano	and a few men, almost immobile, drop
o salpano le reti. Con un segno	and pull up nets. With a wave
della mano additavi all'altra sponda	of your hand you pointed at the unseen
invisibile la tua patria vera	land across the sea - your own.
Poi seguimmo il canale fino alla darsena	Then we followed the canal...)

('Dora Markus', *Le occasioni*, ll. 1-7)

However, this relationship turns out to be impossible as the hearer-addressee is either absent or has lost his/her memory:

La speranza di pure rivederti	(The hope that somehow I might see you again
m'abbandonava;	Was slipping from me;
e mi chiesi se questo che mi chiude	And I asked myself if what shut me out
ogni senso di te, schermo d'immagini,	From any sense of you - that screen of images -
ha i segni della morte o dal passato	Bore death's stigmata; or if something of the past
è in esso, ma distorto e fatto labile,	Still lingered in it, but distorted and grown tenuous,
un tuo barbaglio...	Some dazzle of you...)

(Mottetto 6, *Le occasioni*, ll. 1-7)

Tu non ricordi la casa dei doganieri	(You don't remember the shorewatchers' house
sul rialzo a strapiombo sulla scogliera:	above the rock-reef, sheer, upon the height:
desolata t'attende dalla sera	it waits for you bereavedly since the night
in cui v'entrò lo sciame dei tuoi pensieri	the swarm of your thoughts came there to house
e vi sostò irrequieto.	unquietly to stay.)

('La casa dei doganieri', *Le occasioni*, ll. 1-5)

Throughout his work Montale puts emphasis on the same problem in different ways by changing tone and expressions, but fundamentally pivoting around the same question: how to defeat the spatio-temporal-historical limitations of reality. Montale adopts poetry as a means of expression in order to carry out his research into his philosophical view of life and reality: the result of this is that his poetic system can be viewed as a philosophy where *poesis* equals *gnosis* (Brose 1984; Riccobono 1994).[2]

On reading Montale's poems, one is struck by the richness of structures adopted within the text, and by the highly metaphorical expressions which indicate spatio-temporal dimensions and interpersonal relationships between poetic voices and addressees present within the same fictitious context.

Many studies have been carried out on the various identities of the persons into which the poetic addressees, present within the context of the Montalian poems, could be conflated. Montale himself often played around with the identity of the addressees in his poems and their appearance in the different texts: this contributed to the allegorical nature of his poems. Martelli (1977) has come to the conclusion that the women addressees in Montale's poems can be synthesised into one and the same throughout his work.[3]

The poem 'Il tu', (from *Satura*), explains the presence of multiple 'tu' (addressees) as the projection of one 'tu' which Montale himself, by commenting on his critics' definitions, refers to as an 'istituto' (a concept). I shall use this as a starting point for my arguments in this article. If the 'tu' is a conceptual-poetic construct, it

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is easy to view it as a linguistic construct and follow its developments from a linguistic-deictic point of view. Moreover, this seems to be indirectly authorised by Montale himself:

I critici ripetono,
da me deputati,
che il mio tu è un istituto
Senza questa colpa avrebbero saputo
che in me i tanti sono uno anche se appaiono
moltiplicati dagli specchi. Il male
è che l'uccello preso nel paretaio
non sa se lui sia lui o uno dei troppi
suoi duplicati

(The critics repeat,
derailed by me,
that my 'tu' is a construct.
Without this fault they would have known
that in me the many are one even though they
appear
multiplied by the mirrors. The bad thing
is that the bird caught in the net
does not know whether it is itself or one of his
many
duplicates)

('Il tu', *Satura*)

Exegeses of the poem 'In limine' (see also section 5) include Ramat 1972, Brose 1984, Fabris 1984, Giachery 1985. Ramat pondered on the possible identification of the garden with the text itself. In this article I would like to expand this point to propose a new reading of 'In limine', through the study of the deictic system. I believe that the study of deixis is of fundamental help for the critic to analyse the Montalian poetic text as a dynamic one where the reader and the addressee can, in some instances, be identical and where their roles must be of an active nature in order for the poems to achieve their philosophical purpose: i.e. function as gnostic instruments of salvation.

2. What is deixis?[4]

Each natural language functions as a system of infinite potential texts which are referentially connected to the surrounding social and physical context of its speakers. Language in use is, therefore, closely connected to the world in which the speakers live, and necessarily refers to that world. Reference is a fundamental component in languages as a speaker can only speak about, make comments, describe facts which are related to existence: in other words, languages must not 'violate an existential presupposition' (Lyons 1981: 225). In literary language, where contexts are fictionally created, the same principle applies (Lyons 1981; Riffaterre 1979). More will be said about deixis in literary texts, especially lyric poems, in the next section of this paper.

The term 'deixis' refers to the function that demonstratives, personal pronouns, tense and other grammatical and lexical linguistic elements have in an utterance in its relation to the spatio-temporal co-ordinates of the surrounding environment.

Deixis has been recognised by Lyons (1975) as the source of reference. It encodes grammatically and/or lexically the relationship between the speaker (of the utterance), or **zero-point** (Lyons 1977: 638; Green 1992: 122), or *origo* (Bühler 1934), and the spatio-temporal context where the utterance is encoded. It also clarifies the interpersonal relationship between the speaker and the hearer(s).

Deixis involves a centre of orientation which is egocentric because the encoder of the utterance functions as the origin of a relationship between him/herself and the surrounding cognitive environment. As a matter of fact the deictic system sets the co-ordinates of communication from the speaker's point of view and it encodes the speaker's subjectivity (Lyons 1982).[5] Deixis can be more clearly understood if it is related to its origins in the canonical situation of utterance, i.e. the face-to-face linguistic interaction.

I begin by defining some of the deictic categories which I shall be referring to in the examination of Montale's poems.[6]

The spatial category of deixis includes spatial adverbs such as 'here' and 'there'; direction expressions 'left', 'right', 'up', 'down', 'north', 'south', 'east' and 'west'; also demonstrative adjectives and pronouns 'this' and 'that'.

Temporal deixis includes temporal adverbs 'now', 'then', 'today', 'yesterday', 'tomorrow'. Tense is another linguistic element which is accounted for by the category of temporal deixis. Tense in tensed languages allows the speaker and, together with him/her, the hearer, to project themselves into the past or future, backwards and forward in time, as if texts were real worlds with precise spatio-temporal dimensions. The so-called **deictic projection** (Lyons 1977) allows the speaker and the hearer of a text to picture themselves at a time t_1, different from the coding time t_0, and (re-)experience the event while it is recounted.

The central tense that expresses the temporal dimension of the act of utterance is the present tense. The temporal co-ordinate of the act of utterance, or **coding** time, is to be seen as separable from the time referred to in the utterance itself, or **content** time (Sell 1987). In the canonical situation of utterance **coding** time coincides with **receiving** time, or what I would rather define as **decoding** time, as this involves a relationship with a hearer and his/her decoding of the message. We have already seen how fundamental the function of the addressee is for the functioning of deixis. However, outwith the face-to-face situation of utterance, coding and receiving times occur separately.

The category of deictic reference comprehends: definite referring expressions, demonstratives (adjectives and pronouns); definite articles; pronominal expressions.

Origo includes first and second personal pronouns; vocatives; honorific titles. I agree with Green (1992) in including second person personal pronouns under the category of the *origo*, as second persons refer to the hearer/addressee who plays an active role in the context of utterance and therefore can be seen as closely related to the *origo*.

Empathetic deixis may be considered as a sub-category of the *origo*. In fact it refers to those parts of the speech which encode mental proximity or distance to the *origo*. When such expressions are present within the context of utterance, the text may involve an emotional participation of the speaking voice and of the reader in the fictitious context. This can be achieved by the use of proximal demonstratives when referring to objects or persons which are not present within the same spatio-temporal co-ordinates where the poetic *persona* and the reader are placed: by using proximal demonstratives the speaking voice establishes a closer emotional relationship with what is being described: this relationship can be defined as empathy.

3. Deixis in the poetic text

Bakhtin (1981) claimed that whilst the novel originated and developed as a heteroglossic and dialogic literary genre, poetry is a monologic and monoglossic linguistic phenomenon and is, therefore, inferior. Some studies have been made recently on the nature of the language in the lyric poem and on the deictic systems which mobilise speaking voices and contexts of utterance within the lyric poem (Wales 1988, 1993; Geyer-Ryan 1988; Herman 1989; Green 1992; Semino 1992, 1995; Widdowson 1993).

This study proposes to emphasise the dynamic nature of the lyric poem by showing that the role of the reader is also dynamic and that, in certain cases, the reader takes part in the fictitious contexts he/she creates while reading/interpreting the poetic text. This will be the starting point for the discussion of the dynamic relationship between reader and text. The aim of this paper is to show that the role of the reader is built into the economy of Montale's poetic texts.

The origin of deixis lies in the face-to-face situation of utterance, i.e. the situation which implies that the speaker, the hearer and the referent are present within the same spatio-temporal context. If the referent is not present within the same context, then the speaker can indicate the referent by having recourse, for example, to demonstratives or definite articles. It is possible, however, for humans to create discourse and operate it outside the boundaries of the canonical situation. This is the case of written discourse where a fictitious context has to be created pivoting around a speaking voice and, when the text is read, recreated by the addressee. In order to do this it is necessary to recreate spatio-temporal and interpersonal dimensions similar to those which regulate the human physical environment.

The behaviour and implications of deictic systems and the nature of the speaking voices who grammatically behave as subjects of the fictional 'enunciations' (Todorov 1981: 324) have been a topic of much attention

for stylisticians in the past few years. Traditionally the speaking voices or *personae* of texts, around which deictic systems revolve, cannot be identified with real-life authors, but are linguistic constructs (Herman 1989) deriving from the relationship that a reader establishes with a text when interpreting it. The same can be said when referring to poetic voices within the lyric poem genre.

Green (1992: 125) defines lyric poetry as a genre that mobilises a 'monologic "I" figure'. In this he seems to agree with the Bakhtinian concept of poetic voice. It is true that in many cases the poetic *persona* of a poem can be monological, but there are enough cases, especially in 20th century poetry, where there are linguistic proofs that the nature of the poetic voice is dialogic. There are cases, however, of poetic texts where neither a deictic centre, or zero-point (Green 1992: 122), nor the objects referred to deictically, are present within the context of situation of a poem. In this case we refer to the category of deixis at *phantasma* (Bühler 1982).

Semino (1992) has claimed that the relationship between the speaking voice in the lyrical poem and the reader can vary from the case where the reader is a complete spectator to the fictitious context of utterance, as if an 'eavesdropper' listening to other people's private conversations, to the case where the reader is drawn into the context to participate emotionally in the implications of the poetic text. The emotional participation of the reader in the fictitious context can be achieved by the use of **empathetic deixis**.

Green claims that in a lyric poem the situation is often dramatised and that an **experiencing** mode and an **observing** mode of description are expressed simultaneously. The experiencing mode of description in language is considered deictic by Lyons (1977; 1982), as the speaking voice can project itself back into a precise past temporal co-ordinate and narrate the event(s) as if it was being experienced again during the act of utterance. On the other hand, the observing mode of description is non-deictic as it presupposes a detached way of narrating events.

> The term [...] 'historical', is intended to suggest the narration of events, ordered in terms of successivity and presented dispassionately with the minimum of subjective involvement; and this mode of description clearly related to the static, non-deictic, objective conception of time. The term 'experiential', on the other hand, is suggestive of the kind of description that might be given by someone who is personally involved in what he is describing; and this mode is no less clearly related to the dynamic, deictic, subjective conception of time. (Lyons 1977: 688)

If the experiencing mode and the observing modes of description are present in the lyric poem at the same time, that means that the concept of time in poetry is partly deictic and partly non-deictic.

Green (1992) considers deixis a central element in the understanding of the lyric poem, because it enables the reader to construct a context so as to interpret the symbolic meaning of the text. Semino agrees and underlines the fact that the contexts readers build may vary 'depending on the interplay between the deictic expressions in the text, the subject-matter and linguistic properties of the text as a whole, the readers' attitudes and background knowledge' (1992: 135). She has also shown how the deictic centre can shift within the same text and, thus, how the point of view of the fictional enunciations can vary (Semino 1995). This has drawn attention to deictic shifts which imply the presence of multiple voices within the same text. She has, thus, proved the dynamic nature of poetic voices in the lyric poem.

Deixis is egocentric in nature as the context created by the speaking voice requires that the decoder assumes the speaking *persona*'s point of view in order for the text to be understood. The poetic voice or voices within the same poetic text are represented by the number of different 'I's or zero-points present. Each zero-point within the poetic structure is egocentric in nature and identifies a slight change of perspective within the narration. In this sense, more than one subjectivity can be found in a text, representing as many *alter egos* of what Short and Leech refer to as the 'implied author' (1981: 259), as there are deictic centres. If poetry is partly deictic and partly non-deictic, then to each narratorial level, identified by one deictic centre, there should correspond two different perspectives of narration, i.e. one in the experiential mode and one in the observing mode. It can be claimed, at this point, that poetry uses, as prose does, a Chinese-box narratorial structure, where the observing mode of narration can be considered more authoritative, or closer to the level

of the implied author, than the experiential one. This consideration shows the complexity of the structure of a poetic text, contrary to the simplistic idea of poetry which would derive from the Bakhtinian theories.

4. Text to reader: three examples in the Montalian poetic system.

The analysis of the following three poems by Montale is meant to show a cline of relationships between reader and poetic text within the Montalian system. These relationships are created by the different use of deixis, by the presence or absence of an explicit addressee within the fictitious context and by the possible overlapping of addressee and reader or speaking voice and reader.

In 'Forse un mattino' ('Perhaps one morning') it can be seen that the deictic system is organised as revolving completely around the first person speaker 'I'.

Forse un mattino andando in un'aria di vetro,	(Perhaps one morning going along in a barren air like glass
arida, rivolgendomi, vedrò compirsi il miracolo:	I shall turn around to see the miracle take place:
il nulla alle mie spalle, il vuoto dietro	nothingness at my back, a void stretching
di me, con un terrore di ubriaco.	behind me, with a drunk man's terror.
Poi come s'uno schermo, s'accamperanno di gitto	Then as on a screen, assembling themselves in one rush
alberi case e colli per l'inganno consueto.	will come trees, houses, hills, by the accustomed trick.
Ma sarà troppo tardi, ed io me n'andrò zitto	But it will be too late: and I shall go along quiet
tra gli uomini che non si voltano, col mio segreto.	among the men who do not turn, with my secret.)

The spatial co-ordinates are set by negation, 'nothingness at my back', by use of the possessive adjective 'my' which refers to the poetic voice of the fictitious context. There truly seems to be nothing or nobody else present in the poetic context but the poetic *persona*. It is clear that the deictic structure of the poem is organised in such a way that no hearer is implied within the poetic context. The enunciation is either thought or spoken by a person to himself in an environment defined solely by a first-person personal pronoun and first-person possessive adjectives which function as *origo* deictics. This structure seems to prove that the poetic voice in this context is monological.

In the poem n.7 of Xenia II, from *Satura* (1971), the use of direct speech and the interplay of the roles of first and second person within the utterances makes it clear that the reader is witnessing a conversation between two persons.[7]

'Non sono mai stato certo di essere al mondo'.	('I have never been sure of being in this world'.
'Bella scoperta, m'hai risposto, e io?'	'What a discovery, you've replied, and how about
'Oh il mondo tu l'hai morsicchiato, se anche	me?'.
in dosi omeopatiche. Ma io...'	'At least you've taken morsels of the world, though
	in homeopathic doses. But I...'.)

The second-person pronoun 'tu' implies the presence of the explicit addressee, to whom the poetic voice is speaking, within the fictitious context of utterance. The fact that the addressee replies to the poetic voice's statement, turns the addressee into a second poetic voice and the first poetic voice into a second addressee. The reader is therefore placed in the position of somebody who is overhearing a conversation between other people: an 'invisible eavesdropper' (Semino 1992). The context of the poetic text can be considered as a fictitious face-to-face situation of utterance. At the same time it is possible to say that the deictic system of this poem is organised revolving around two poetic voices, therefore its context presents multiple voices.

Finally, 'Meriggiare pallido e assorto' ('To laze the noon'), from *Ossi di seppia*, presents a deictic organisation at *phantasma*.

Meriggiare pallido e assorto	(To laze the noon pale and thoughtful
presso un rovente muro d'orto,	near to some blazing garden-wall,
ascoltare tra i pruni e gli sterpi	to listen in the thorn-hedge and the brake
schiocchi di merli, frusci di serpi	to clattering of blackbird, rustle of snake.

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Nelle crepe del suolo o su la veccia	In cracks of the soil, where the vetch is
spiar le file di rosse formiche	to catch the red ants in their single tracks
ch'ora si rompono e ora s'intrecciano	now braking formation, now intersecting
a sommo di minuscole biche.	upon the top of their minute stacks.
Osservare tra i frondi il palpitare	To watch through green branches the throbbing
lontano di scaglie di mare	of sea-scales far in the offing
mentre si levano tremuli scricchi	while the wavering creak goes up
di cicale dai calvi picchi.	of cicadas from the bold mountain tops.
E andando nel sole che abbaglia	And as you go in the dazzling sun
sentire con triste meraviglia	to feel with sad bewilderment
com'è tutta la vita e il suo travaglio	how all of life and its suffering
in questo seguitare una muraglia	is in this steady following
che ha in cima cocci aguzzi di bottiglia.	a wall with jagged bottle for its rim.)[9]

No first-person speaker is present within the fictitious context: the deictic structure pivots around a number of infinitives ('Meriggiare', 'ascoltare', 'spiar', 'osservare', 'sentire') and a gerund ('andando') which do not mobilise a spatio-temporal zero-point. The co-ordinate of time in this poem is null. The first word of the poem is 'meriggiare' which means to spend the hot hours of noon resting in the shade.[9] 'Meriggio' is noon, is the moment when the sun is at its highest. The transformation of a moment 'meriggio' into a verb of durative action 'meriggiare' creates a sudden breach within the concept of time. One moment has been transformed into a undefined period of time: in other words, the conventional concept of time has been nullified and the whole of the text floats in a world where only space exists. This sense of lack of time is perfectly rendered in Italian by the indefinite use of the infinitive of verbs and by the gerund in line 13.

The demonstrative 'questo' (l. 16) sets the spatial co-ordinate and leads the reader to two interpretations: the former refers to the fictional context created by the poetic text; the latter can be extended by the reader to the human condition in general, of life as suffering. In the first interpretation of the text the reader can assume a psychological distance from the context of utterance as an imagined situation; the second reading of the text implies a possible recognition by the reader of the context of fictional utterance with life in general. This creates a blur in the distinction between the real and the fictitious contexts, where any reader may become involved within the spatial deixis. The spatial deixis being defined by the demonstrative 'questo' ('this') can also be interpreted as **empathetic** deixis.

In these analyses, we have seen that the relationship between text and reader is variable according to the overall meaning of the text, to the deictic system employed by the poetic language and to the knowledge, background and psychological distance adopted by the reader. There are cases, though, where the role and presence of the reader is essential to the functioning of the poetic text. In these cases it is not only possible for the reader to place himself within the fictive context of enunciation, but it is necessary that he does so. I would refer to this as 'role of the reader built into the text'. To illustrate this point the next section will focus on the analysis of Eugenio Montale's poem 'In limine'.

5. Space dimensions and the relationship between text and reader in 'In limine' by Eugenio Montale.[10]

In this section the poem 'In limine' ('On the threshold'), which Montale chose to place at the opening of his first book, *Ossi di seppia* (1925, 1928), will be analysed. This poem is paradigmatic for the use of deixis and the aim of this section is to show that the analysis of the deixis system within this text is fundamental for the comprehension of the dynamic nature of Montale's poetic language. In particular, focus will be on the dynamics of the relationship between speaking voice, text and reader.

Godi se il vento ch'entra nel pomario	(Be glad if the wind in the green nursery
vi rimena l'ondata della vita:	brings you back the surging of life:
qui dove affonda un morto	here where a dead coil
viluppo di memorie,	of memories sinks,
orto non era, ma reliquario.	was no garden, but reliquary.

Il frullo che tu senti non è un volo,
ma il commuoversi dell'eterno grembo;
vedi che si trasforma questo lembo
di terra solitario in un crogiuolo.

Un rovello è di qua dall'erto muro.
Se procedi t'imbatti
tu forse nel fantasma che ti salva:
si compongono qui le storie, gli atti
scancellati pel giuoco del futuro.

Cerca una maglia rotta nella rete
che ci stringe, tu balza fuori, fuggi!
Va, per te l'ho pregato, - ora la sete
mi sarà lieve, meno acre la ruggine...

The throbbing that you hear is not of flight,
but tremor in the eternal womb;
see how this solitary edge of land
turns into a crucible.

Rage is on the sheer wall's nearer side.
If you go on, you will come
- you perhaps - across the phantom that saves:
here the stories are composed, the acts
that the game of the future makes void.

Look for a broken mesh in the net
that grips us, leap out, and escape!
Go, for you I've asked this - now my thirst
will be mild, less biting the rust...)[11]

It should be observed that the coding time (the time of the enunciation or fictional speech event) and the content time (the time of the enounced or narrated event) of this poem are identical: this is clear because of the use of the imperatives 'Godi', 'vedi', 'cerca', 'fuggi', 'balza' and 'va'. The use of imperatives mobilises a deictic centre, the speaking voice, and a silent addressee who is either already within the context of utterance or is being invited to participate in it. The imperatives are therefore acting as *origo* deictics (Green 1992: 126).

The next lexical item which must be considered is the definite article 'il', defining 'pomario' ('nel pomario' - in the apple tree orchard) which acts as a deictic reference. This not only gives the idea that the speaking voice and the addressee know to which orchard the poet is referring to, but knots a tighter bond between them, implying the existence of a well known and familiar place where they have possibly met or, at least, spent some time together. The orchard is a place which recurs frequently in Montale's poetry, especially in his first book.

In the third line we meet the first spatial deictic 'qui' (here) which completes the scene: the context of utterance is defined by the following co-ordinates: *now* and *here*. Moreover, 'here' has some further implications as both the addressee and the speaking voice are placed in the same fictitious context, that is in the apple tree orchard, at the same time (i.e. coding time). *Here* and *now* may also be interpreted as referring to the receiving time (the time of contact between the text and the addressee or decoder). Thus content, coding and receiving times can be interpreted as identical and, from this, it results that 'In limine' is a poetic text *in fieri*: it takes sense from the direct interpretation of the addressee who is now also identical to the reader. This consideration leads us to add some more spatial implications: 'qui', in the third line, not only refers to the 'pomario' but also to the poetic text. At the same time, due to the rhyme that links the first and the fifth lines, it also refers to the 'reliquiario' (reliquary). A reliquary is a place where relics are kept and therefore it connotes a sacred place, but dead; a place where the past lives and where our memories linger, but which is now brought back to life by the wind ('il vento', l. 1). 'Era' (it was, l. 5) suddenly creates a further dimension in the temporal setting: a past situation which is of lesser importance than the present time because it refers to the status of the 'pomario' (now a fertile and productive plot of land) before the wind came to bring back life to it, i.e. when it was only a reliquary.

The presence of two sets of temporal deictic shifters are then of prime importance in order for us to be able to understand the spatial dimensions of the place where the speaking voice has brought us. The space of the context of utterance can have two different natures: a reliquary or an orchard. It is the presence of the wind that can change it from one to the other. We may interpret the wind as the relationship established by the reader-addressee with the speaking voice as a consequence of his/her reading of the poem. In other words the poetic text comes to life and becomes fruitful only because it is read by somebody; were it to remain unread it would be a reliquary, i.e. dead language. Deixis has so far been used by the poet to draw the addressee-reader into the space of a reliquary-poem-orchard situation, thus bringing the wind of life to dead memories in order for them to turn into alive and fruitful language. The need for an addressee-reader is therefore built into the poetic text.

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In the second stanza, from the connotation of a feeling of pleasure ('Godi') where the sense of touch is involved, we are now attracted by a sound: 'il frullo' ('the throbbing'). The poet uses a definite article with the word 'frullo' ('il') as a deictic reference in order for us to hear the sounds he is referring to. This sound is being heard by both the addressee-reader (il frullo che tu senti) and the speaking voice. At the beginning of the poem the speaking voice was progressively making use of different categories of deixis in order to invite the reader to become part of the text and to bring back to it the breath of life. Now that the reader-addressee has become part of the poetic text and has transformed the reliquary back into a fruitful orchard, the poet directs the reader's attention to what is happening within the orchard, connoted as a symbolical space. We find another imperative in line 8, 'vedi' (literally 'see', but there seems to be a more active meaning in the verb, i.e. 'look'), which functions as an *origo* deictic and connotes a new sense of perception: sight. The use of deixis results in the complete participation of the reader in the context of enunciation.

We encounter a new spatial deictic: 'questo' ('this'). 'This' is a demonstrative pronoun which implies shared knowledge between the speaker and the listener, but also coexistence in the same space: the poetic text has become a metaphoric space, similar to the spatial dimension which we know from our experience of reality. The 'reliquary' has been turned into an 'orchard' by the wind of life, now 'this solitary edge of land' ('questo lembo / di terra solitario') is transforming itself into a 'crucible' ('si trasforma [...] in un crogiuolo'). In the previous stanza the poet has chosen to use a past tense (the imperfect 'era') which, together with the spatial deictic 'qui', creates a double concept of time within the text: a time when the poem is dead and, after the arrival of the 'wind', a new temporal situation, where everything becomes alive and productive. In this stanza the poet has used a present tense, 'si trasforma', because the reader-addressee, being part of the text, is now taking part in the transformations of the metaphorical space. The space of the text is, therefore, a real 'crucible', as the concept of time, space and their interrelationship with the speaking voice and the reader-addressee are dynamic.

The concept of space really does change within this poetic text when we start reading the third stanza. A new spatial connotation is present in the text: 'l'erto muro' ('the sheer wall'). The 'rovello' (rage) is on the nearer side of the wall ('di qua dall'erto muro') where the speaking voice and the reader-addressee are placed. The wall is thus dividing two different spaces and, as the wall is high, it is implicit that the space that lies beyond the wall is not easily reached. The adverb 'di qua' (on the nearer side) therefore sets some deictic implications and, at the same time, a metaphorical image of the closed nature and difficulties of the space where man is obliged to exist. But there is some hope of salvation for the reader-addressee if he/she can carry on towards the wall, or, perhaps, carry on reading not only this poem, but the whole book, to which this text permits access.[12]

Use is made of the personal pronoun 'tu' (you) in lines 6 and 12. But, if in line 6 the reader-addressee referred to by 'tu' was listening to 'il frullo' which the speaking voice could also hear, in line 12 'tu' refers only to the addressee. The speaking voice is suggesting to the reader-addressee to proceed. So far, the use of deixis in this text has attracted the reader-addressee from somewhere outside the context into the enounced and made him/her participate in the dynamics of what is going on there. Now the deixis system is projecting the reader into what lies beyond the enounced, i.e. beyond the wall, by also promising a kind of salvation from the 'rovello' that lies in the addressee-reader's present position, i.e. within the apple orchard or the *hortus conclusus*.[13]

We encounter a new spatial deictic 'qui' (here) which is described as the place where 'si compongono ... le storie, gli atti / scancellati pel giuoco del futuro'. The spatial adverb 'qui' is not connoting the same space connoted by 'qui' in line 2. The speaking voice has been able to project the reader-addressee beyond the wall into a new space. The analysis of the system of deictics enables us to see this sudden change of spatial co-ordinates. The reader has been taken into a symbolical space by the speaking voice. Is it a space beyond life or simply the rest of *Ossi di seppia*, or a general space of poetic vision and composition? Perhaps the third stanza holds more definite answers to these questions.

The speaking voice prompts the reader-addressee to look for a 'broken mesh in the net / that grips us' (cerca una maglia rotta nella rete / che ci stringe). It is clear that the place connoted by 'here' is in some way unpleasant, restrictive for both the speaking voice and the reader-addressee. The use of the imperative,

'cerca' (look for), which functions as an *origo* deictic, indicates that only the reader-addressee is able to find the 'broken mesh' and, thus, to escape. In line 16 we read: '[...] tu balza fuori, fuggi' (leap out, and escape). The speaking voice, who attracts the attention of the reader-addressee at the beginning of the poem and draws him to participate in the dynamics of the text-orchard, is now advising the addressee to get out of it, to escape. The *origo* deictic 'tu' of line 16 clearly draws a distinction between the speaking voice and the addressee-reader. Whilst there is a possibility for the addressee to escape, there seems to be no way out for the speaking voice. The *ego* has been looking for a way to go beyond the wall but has obviously failed.[14] The dichotomy between the *ego* and the addressee is further highlighted by the fact that the speaking voice has even prayed that at least the reader-addressee could jump out of the unpleasant place where they both seem to be prisoners: 'Va, per te l'ho pregato, - ora la sete / mi sarà lieve, meno acre la ruggine...'.

The use of deixis in the fourth stanza of this poem seems to be exactly opposite to that of the previous stanzas. In the first three stanzas deixis works towards the attraction of the addressee-reader into the spatial and temporal dimensions of the poem-orchard. In this last stanza, both semantically and deictically, the speaking voice is trying to convince the addressee to depart from the 'pomario'. This seems to be a contradiction. This apparent contradiction is a proof that the spatial deictic marked by 'qui' (here) in line 3 and the spatial deictics marked by 'qui' in line 13 and 'fuori' (outside) in line 16 are referring to two different spatial dimensions. The first 'qui' of line 3 refers to a positive spatial dimension; or which has become positive as soon as the reader-addressee has brought back to it the breath of life which has turned it from the status of a reliquary to a melting pot. The other two spatial deictics refer to a more negative space which is perceived by both the speaking voice and the reader-addressee as a claustrophobic place, limited by a wall, and from which one wants to escape.

We could interpret the first spatial dimension as being the space of the poetic language which can help the reader-addressee to escape from a negative existential condition. The speaking voice has clearly succeeded in helping the reader-addressee to go beyond the 'wall' and this is understood by the new temporal deictic 'ora' (now) ('ora la sete / mi sarà pi lieve, meno acre la ruggine...'). The temporal deictic 'ora' refers to a new condition where the reader-addressee has managed to escape from the 'pomario'. 'Ora... sarà' (Now...will be) includes the present as well as the future condition of the speaking voice. Most importantly, the dots which end the poem are symbolical of continuation, they refer to what comes after, they prompt the reader-addressee to turn the page and carry on reading, thus symbolising the passage for which the speaking voice had been praying. Within the internal economy of the poem they may symbolise the repetition of the whole cycle of attraction of a new reader-addressee into the dynamics of the language and thus a new salvation. Once the reader has brought life to the poem and, thus, also to the speaking voice, he/she can make use of the poetic language to go beyond the spatial-temporal limitations to which humankind is subjected. The role of the poet, and of poetry, in general, is suggested to be that of salvation. It is clear now that 'qui' in line 13 has a second meaning: not only does it refer to the claustrophobic space from where the speaking voice and the addressee are trying to escape, but also to a more symbolical space, i.e. the space of poetic intuition and poetic vision.

6. Conclusion

In this poem the analysis of the use of deixis has proved of fundamental help in understanding what kind of relationship the speaking voice wants to establish with the reader-addressee. Such analysis has also shown further implications involved behind the use of spatial and temporal deictics. This text is indicative of the poetic themes which Montale will develop further in his poems. I believe that the study of the deictic system in 'In limine' is a first and essential step towards the comprehension of Montale's linguistic organisation which is closely connected to his philosophy of life and poetry. These conclusions draw attention to the need for a more detailed understanding and further research into the dynamics of the relationship between text and reader.

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NOTES

1. All quotations from Montale's poetry are taken from *Tutte le poesie* (1987), III edizione, Giorgio Zampa (ed.), Milano: Mondadori. All translations, unless otherwise stated in a note, are taken from two works of translation: *Eugenio Montale: Selected Poems.* (1964) translated by G. Kay. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press and *Eugenio Montale: Selected Poems.* (1966) introduced and translated by G. Cambon et al. New York: New Directions.

2. For a further analysis on this point see E. Montale (1972) *Nel nostro tempo.* Milano: Rizzoli Editore, 46ff.

3. The four women addressees are traditionally conflated into Clizia (partly a fictional idealisation of the American scholar Irma Brandeis), a Peruvian woman, and two different versions of Annetta-Arletta. There are two other women who can be classified as addressees number five and six in Montale's poems: Volpe (a fictional projection of the Italian poet Maria Luisa Spaziani) and Mosca (Drusilla Tanzi, Montale's wife, present in 'Ballata scritta in una clinica' and, generally, in *Satura*). Martelli, however finds that the Montalian women have similar fictional features, therefore he is able to synthesise them into one woman figure. For further analysis of this theme see: Martelli (1977); Montale's letter to Guarnieri (1964); notes to the first edition of *Bufera e altro* (1956).

4. I have been much influenced in writing this section on deixis by Lyons (1977), (1982); Green (1992).

5. I use the term 'subjectivity' in the same sense as Lyons (1982).

6. Green (1992) proposes a new classification of the deictic categories: reference, the *origo*, time and space, the text, subjectivity, and syntax. **Text** deixis comprises all the elements which refer the text back to itself, including **impure textual deixis**. **Subjectivity** deixis accounts for the presence of modality in an utterance as modality encodes a subjective experience on the part of the encoder. **Syntax** deixis includes syntactic forms which have a deictic function: for instance an interrogative construction of an utterance presupposes an addressee.
   The final three categories will not be discussed in this section.

7. My own translation.

8. I do not totally agree with Kay's translation of line 6, where the verb 'spiare', literally 'to spy', has been translated by 'to catch'. I think that this would break the overall idea of passive observation of the surrounding world and apathy which characterises 'To laze the afternoon'.

9. See Battaglia (ed.), (1961ff) *Grande Dizionario della Lingua Italiana* Torino: UTET; Devoto & Oli, (1990) *Il dizionario della lingua italiana*, Firenze: Le Monnier.

10. 'In limine' from *Ossi di seppia* (1925 and 1928). The poem 'In limine' opens Montale's first book and its position within the book is *in limine* (on the threshold) to *Ossi di seppia*. Montale chose to publish the whole text in italics.

11. I suggest that 'pomario' should be translated as 'apple-tree orchard', or simply 'orchard' as the theme of the orchard is recurrent in Montale's work.

12. Brose (1984:170) sees a very close resemblance between this text and its position within *Ossi di seppia* and the text written on the door of Dante's *Inferno*.

13. With *hortus conclusus* I allude to the biblical *topos* of *locus amoenus*. For more on *hortus conclusus* in Montale's poetry see Brose (1984) and Giachery (1985).

14. The issue of why the speaking voice *is not able* or *cannot* proceed beyond the wall has been explored in West (1981), Brose (1984), Riccobono (1994).

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